



# BUILDING SIGNS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### *When are sign permits required?*

Sign permits are required for all signs. A “sign” is any text or graphic intended to announce or draw attention to a business or other operation. Signs inside buildings need permits when they are located so as to be conspicuously visible and readable, without intentional and deliberate effort, from outside the building.

### *Changes to existing signs:*

Sign permits are required for changes to the copy of existing signs unless the sign is designed for changeable copy, such as on a theater marquee.

### *Are some types of building signs prohibited?*

Flashing signs are not allowed. In some districts, exposed neon and other forms of direct (undiffused) illumination are not allowed. Pennants and balloons are usually not allowed. There is a general rule that signs must be on the site of the business they advertise.

## SIGN PERMIT INFORMATION

### *How do I apply for a sign permit?*

Apply for a sign permit for a permanent sign by completing a Permit Application and turning in 2 sets of sign plans. You may prepare the plans yourself.

### *What do sign permits cost?*

The permit fee is the total of:

|                               | <i>Illuminated Sign (new)</i>                      | <i>Non-illuminated Sign (new)</i>                  | <i>Copy Change Only</i>                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Application Fee</i>        | \$41.40 + Electrical Permit                        | \$41.40                                            | \$41.40                                            |
| <i>Inspection Fee</i>         | \$96.60 per sign                                   | \$69 per sign                                      | \$55.20 per sign                                   |
| <i>Document Recording Fee</i> | \$0.69 to \$1.38<br>(more for multiple-page plans) | \$0.69 to \$1.38<br>(more for multiple-page plans) | \$0.69 to \$1.38<br>(more for multiple-page plans) |

### *Where do I apply for a sign permit?*

Apply in person at the Development Services Center at **39550 Liberty Street**, Fremont, 94538 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Friday. Appointments are not required but are available on request by phoning (510) 494-4443.

### *How long does it take to get a permit?*

Most sign permits can be approved while you wait.

### *Shopping centers and other Planned Sign Programs:*

“Planned Sign Programs” govern some shopping centers and other building complexes. Planned Sign Programs may specify colors, dimensions and other details of signs. Planned Sign Programs are required for certain types of signs usually found at gas stations and drive-through restaurants. Copy changes in existing Planned Sign Programs may be approved while you wait.

- ***How do I know if I’m in a Planned Sign Program?***
- ***How do I apply for a new Planned Sign Program or to amend an existing one?***

To find out if your property is under a Planned Sign Program, or how to apply for a Planned Sign Program or an amendment, contact City staff. Review of new Planned Sign Programs or Planned Sign Program amendments takes about 4 weeks. The fee is \$225.

### ***Signs in historic districts or on historic sites:***

Signs on properties in Historic Overlay Districts or on historic sites or structures need review by the Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB). HARB meets monthly and the fee for review is \$225. Contact City staff submittal requirements. Properties in historic Niles, Mission San Jose and Centerville are most likely to be considered historic.

Signs in the historic commercial districts of Centerville, Irvington, Niles and Mission San Jose are also subject to special design guidelines.

### ***How do I know if my property is historic or has design guidelines?***

To find out if your property is in a Historic Overlay District, if the structure or site is historic, or if the property has special design standards for signs, contact City staff.

### ***What is needed on sign plans?***

Sign plans need to show:

- The shape of the lot, the location of all existing buildings and the location of parking areas, driveways and adjacent streets (site plan).
- A view of the side of the building on which the sign will be placed, showing the proposed sign and all existing signs and the dimensions of the sign copy (elevation).
- Colors and materials of the sign and of the copy on the sign as well as the type of illumination, if any.
- Details of any proposed electrical work.

### ***Languages other than English:***

If any portion of your sign (except proper names) will be in a language other than English, or if any portion of your sign will use characters not used in English, you must provide with your application a literal translation of those portions. This allows staff to ensure that your sign conforms to applicable regulations, such as announcing only goods or services available on-site.

The City also encourages, but does not require, a translation of non-English text to appear on the sign itself. This can help facilitate response to calls for emergency services as well as help businesses appeal to a wide cross-section of customers.

## **AFTER A SIGN PERMIT IS ISSUED**

### ***Do permanent signs need to be inspected?***

Yes. Sign installations typically require 2 inspections. The first is to inspect the footing and any attachment and the second is the final inspection.

### ***How are inspections arranged?***

1. To request an inspection, call our Automated Inspection Request Service at (510) 494-4485. You can make your inspection request 24 hours a day and up to one business day in advance of the requested inspection day. All requests scheduled by 6:30 a.m. will be scheduled for that business day.
2. If you would like to know the *time of day* your project is scheduled for inspection, please call your inspector directly on the scheduled day between the hours indicated on your Inspection Record card.
3. To *cancel* an inspection without incurring a re-inspection fee, please call your inspector or the Building Inspection office (510 494-4400) by 8:30 a.m. the day of the inspection.

### ***How long are permits valid for permanent signs?***

Your sign permit will expire after 180 days if the work is not inspected. Once the work is completed and passes its final inspection the permit is valid for as long as the sign stands.

## **DETAILED REGULATIONS FOR BUILDING SIGNS**

### ***Can my business have a sign?***

Building signs are allowed for all businesses that have a direct entrance from outside the building for the exclusive use of their own customers and employees. If your business is in a multi-tenant building, any building sign must be on your own storefront (the portion of the building abutting your tenant space).

### ***How big may my building sign be?***

Your building may have signs on up to 3 sides. Building signs may total 1 square foot in area for each linear foot of the width of the building frontage (1:1), up to a maximum of 130 square feet. If your storefront is less than 30 feet wide, you may have a sign or signs totaling 30 square feet.

If you are a tenant with more than one frontage in a multi-tenant building, the size of signs allowed on secondary frontages is one-half (1/2) what is indicated by the formula above.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- On sign regulations, contact **Planning** staff at (510) 494-4455 or [planinfo@fremont.gov](mailto:planinfo@fremont.gov).
- On permit procedures and fees, contact **Plans and Permits** staff at (510) 494-4460.
- To make an appointment, contact the Permit Center Receptionist at (510) 494-4443 or [DSC\\_Recep@fremont.gov](mailto:DSC_Recep@fremont.gov).

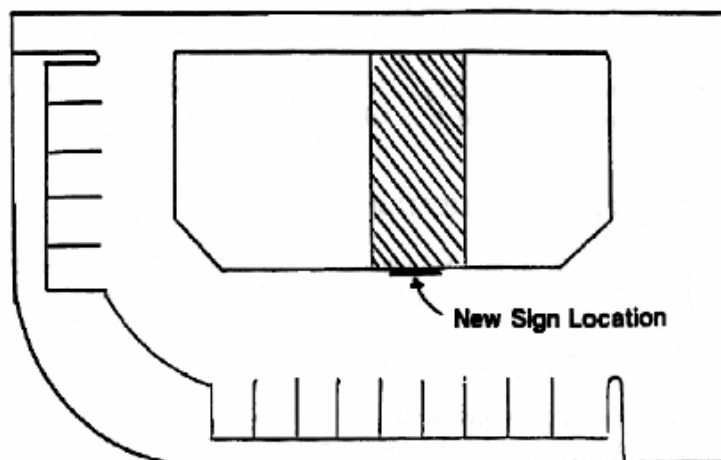
City offices are located at:  
Development Services Center  
39550 Liberty Street 94538  
P.O. Box 5006  
Fremont, CA 94537-5006

City offices are open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Friday.

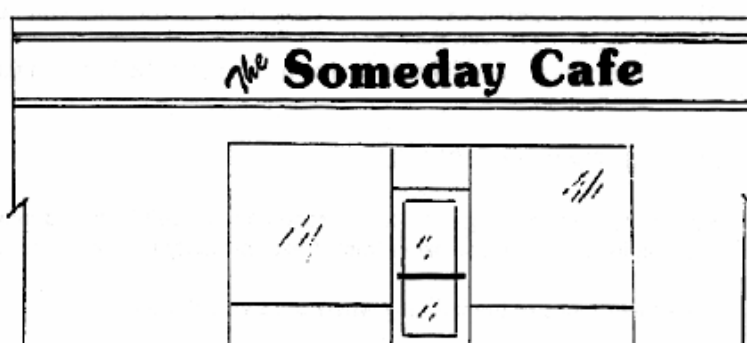
You can view the Fremont Municipal Code at [www.codepublishing.com/ca/fremont](http://www.codepublishing.com/ca/fremont). The sign regulations are found in the code in Title VIII, Chapter 2, Article 21 (beginning with Section 8-22100) and in Article 1, Section 8-2192. You can also purchase a copy of the regulations from staff.

## EXAMPLE SIGN PLANS

**SITE PLAN**



**STOREFRONT  
ELEVATION**



**SIGN  
DETAILS**

### Non-Illuminated Sign

#### COLORS:

The - Red PMS #613C  
Someday Cafe - Blue PMS #726A  
Letter Returns - White

#### MATERIALS:

Plastic Faces  
Alum. Returns

3/16" pin mounted  
2" long pins  
4 per letter

